

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Caregiver Rally on the Capitol Lawn!**

Phoenix, Arizona, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 — The newly formed Arizona Caregiver Coalition is hosting a Caregiver Rally on the Capitol Lawn on March 13<sup>th</sup> to celebrate and advocate for informal (unpaid) caregivers. These caregivers are often referred to as “family caregivers”, even though one doesn’t have to be an actual family member to be an informal caregiver. There is a very good chance that most people in Arizona will speak to an informal caregiver today and not even know it! There are an estimated 570,000 caregivers in Arizona providing unpaid services to family members and loved ones. Those free services are equivalent to approximately \$5.6 BILLION worth of in-home health care services, representing about 3/4<sup>ths</sup> of all in-home care provided!

These caregivers deserve to be recognized and supported! “The Caregiver Rally on the Capitol Lawn on March 13<sup>th</sup> is designed to both celebrate informal caregivers and to create public awareness of the incredibly important role they play” explained David Besst, Caregiver Support Specialist for the State of Arizona. The Department of Economic Security, where Mr. Besst works within the Division of Aging and Adult Services, in conjunction with the Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging, has worked since late in 2006 to facilitate the development of a statewide coalition to support informal caregivers. This rally is the first public event for the Arizona Caregiver Coalition, and this will also be the first chance for the public to learn about the new Lifespan Respite Care Program being offered by the Division of Aging and Adult Services. That program is designed to offer a break to stressed caregivers who can’t access respite services through any other programs, and is based on HB-2789 that passed in last year’s session of the Arizona Legislature.

Caregivers who attend the rally will receive “toolkit” gift bags filled with great items to help them as caregivers and provide information for both them and the loved ones they assist. They’ll also be able to visit with support providers offering resources, with many different caregiving communities represented, such as kinship caregivers, caregivers of aging parents, caregivers of loved ones and spouses living with a disability, and tribal caregivers. Learn about the new Arizona Caregiver Coalition, and visit with KAET, Channel Eight, to learn about the upcoming film, “Caring for Your Parents”, which will debut in April. There will also be great speakers, fun stuff and prize giveaways!

More about the Caregiver Rally and the Arizona Caregiver Coalition can be found at [www.azcaregiver.org](http://www.azcaregiver.org).

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